

ADVENTURE PROBE

AUGUST 1992 £2.00

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 8



I'm off to buy a
copy of
ADVENTURE PROBE

Established in June 1986 and still adventuring

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
ADVENTURE PROBE

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LETTERS

It will be assumed that letters sent directly to June Rowe (Letters Editor), 46 Hurdon Way, Launceston, Cornwall, England, PL15 9HX are for publication, all other communications should be sent to the address below.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Copies can be ordered monthly or in multioles up to 12 issues; sorry no discount for quantity. Prices per issue: U.K. £2.00, Europe & Eire £2.50, Rest of World (Surface) £2.50 (Airmail) £3.00. All payments in pounds sterling please. Cheques/Crossed Postal Orders or International Giro payable to ADVENTURE PROBE. Please do not send cash.

BACK ISSUES

All back issues are available, at the above prices. Volume 1 comprises 17 issues (June 1966-Dec 1967). Subsequent volumes are 12 issues Jan-Dec.

ADVERTISING RATES

Short, private advertisements in the In-Touch section are free to subscribers. Trade prices are: FULL PAGE £5.00 HALF PAGE £3.00

DISTRIBUTION

Adventure Probe is distributed during the first week of the month (but will be a little erratic until I get back on schedule). Copy date for contributions and advertisements is 14th of the previous month.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions are gratefully accepted. Please keep me well supplied with computer and adventure-related material. It doesn't matter how brief the entry is, it may be the very information someone has been waiting for. It will be very helpful if items for different sections are on separate pieces of paper. It doesn't have to be printed or typed, but best handwriting will be appreciated. When you submit an entry for the IN-TOUCH section please mark which are adventures, utilities, arcades, etc.

Other more general contributions can still be forwarded as I hope to collate them into special supplements.

POSTAL ADDRESS

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions, etc. but not letters for publication, to:
Barbara Gibb - Editor, Adventure Probe, 52 Burford Road,
Liverpool L16 6AQ. England. U.K.

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HALL OF FAME

Many thanks to the following who have sent in contributions since the previous issue:
Walter Pooley, Ian Osborne, Tim Kemp, Janice Charnley, Steve Clay, A. Allum, Martin Freemantle, Sue Medley, David Charnley, Barbara Bassingthwaite, Tony Collins, Ted Bugler, Diane Rice, Oot Vaughan, Dennis Francombe, Neil Shipman, Tom Leahy, Simon Avery, Harold Dixon, Alf Baldwin, The Grue, Jay Homosutomo and June Rowe.

Special thanks to Sean Doran for the cover picture.

CONFERENCE NEWS from our man on the platform W. D. N. Board

Chancellor set to raise interest rates to height of Flood Control Dam No.3 as pound approaches parity with zorkmid.

"Healing Potions will no longer be available on prescription," says Virgulia Bottomfax.

Five-Star Consulting Wizards to be exempted from Counsel Tax.

Home Secretary announces new "opt-out" scheme for state dungeons.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to my second issue of ADVENTURE PROBE.

I have had quite a good response to my first issue. Many who have sent in subscriptions have added notes to say how nice it was to see it continuing. I'm trying not to read too much into the fact that, of the 206 sent out on approval, (excluding the overseas readers who may not have even received the July issue yet), I haven't heard anything from 101. No doubt there are many reasons, and I'm not downhearted. Thirty four had the faith to subscribe before I had even published my first magazine, and to date over one hundred more have responded since it was distributed.

It was with great reluctance that I increased the price to £2.00 per issue. Forty pages may not seem value for money, but in fact it is quite a lot of text; excluding covers and advertisements it is about 32 pages, each 60 lines x 65 characters. I have plans to increase the number of pages as soon as the quantity of contributions allow. I can negotiate a better price for photocopying if I have a bigger print run each month - so the more subscribers and contributions I have, the bigger and better the magazine!

I think it is vital that Probe continues to cater for all adventurers and all computers. I have seen some of the adventure columns in the glossies disappear entirely, often without any sort of explanation. Others already have only one page and now I hear Tim Kemp of YS is being chopped down from two pages to a measly one - as he says "What can you print on one page?". If, like me, you only buy the magazines for the adventure column, Probe is a basement bargain when you compare prices. Let's hope Ian Osborne of ZAPP 64 continues to keep us well informed.

In order to keep Probe going, I need your contributions. They have been very slow to come in - in fact hardly at all until Barbara Bassingthwaite, Janice Charnley, Alf Baldwin and The Grue answered my S.O.S. and I send a special thanks to each of them. I know that during the summer months adventurers tend to put their computer away, only getting it out when the dark nights and cold weather returns, but surely most of you can send in a few lines about what you have been playing since you last contributed. It doesn't have to be much - your one hint may be the very one someone needed but didn't dare ask about.

You may notice the letters column is only four pages long. This could mean most of you are happy the way things are, but I don't think ALL of you are. Those of you who get From Beyond may have picked up on a remark from Tim about him receiving five or six letters about the demise of Probe which no doubt would have helped me. I have already written to F.B. to appeal for them, and anyone else with anything to say, to write to me with their likes, dislikes and downright hates, and the reasons why, so that I can take action if need be. Unless I know what readers want, I can't even try to produce the sort of magazine that people hope for. Ted Bugler has taken quite a bashing from us in the letter column, but I think he deserves our attention, for at least he has written in about his wishes, and stuck to them.

As soon as I decided to take on the editorship I realized I couldn't be a jack of all trades. I asked June Rowe to take on the Letters, and it may surprise Ted that I asked someone to take on the job of editing the RPG & Strategy Section, but unfortunately he was already too committed to other things. (The vacancy is still open. How about it, Ted.)

I know the Spectrum text adventure scene quite well, also a little bit about the Atari text adventures, but must rely on others to keep me supplied with details on other machines. Many of you have both B-bit and 16-bit machines. Which do you use most, and why? Are you holding onto the B-bit for sentimental reasons, or so that you can play the cheaper text adventures, while the larger machine is used for the thousands of colours-full sound effects-mouse driven adventures, when you can afford them? The advertisement for Adventure Probe in the current issue of From Beyond states "Run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts" and that is how I see Probe. Let me know what YOU think.

My Atari and 9-pin Citizen have given me good service so far, and I went to great lengths to make the July issue look as if it belonged to the other 73 issues that preceded it. This may have been a mistake, but I was new to everything to do with editing and publishing, so I had to learn a new word processor, open a bank account, and find space for all the extra clutter that seems to have already taken over my corner of the living-room.

One possible improvement to Probe that I have been looking at is the general appearance of the magazine. I can't possibly compete with F.B. and Red Herring who have Macintosh computers and super printers, but I do have a copy of TIMEWORKS Desktop Publishing Program (Neil, point taken re spelling!). I am hopeless at reading and understanding manuals, so I usually have to learn by trial and error, which is why I somehow deleted the review file for this issue and had to re-type most of it, and re-compose the review of Dragonslayer.

When I should have been playtesting a very interesting adventure, I spent last weekend messing about with TIMEWORKS, and managed to get some graphics into it (thanks to someone too shy to be named) and even managed to produce a page for Probe - result on page 6. I would have printed this editorial on it but I haven't discovered what to do if I have more than one page of text to import. I think the main text is very clear, despite the reduction from A4 to A5. The font used seems to get about 90 character to a line, but fewer lines to a page. When I have time to experiment, I think I can come up with master pages that will suit Probe. All this will take extra time, as I still have to use the word processor, and then import it to the DTP and then arrange it so that it looks right. I don't mind, so long as you think it is worth it. I hasten to add, there is no fear of me emulating From Beyond, I have no intention of using two or more columns of text.

One last comment. If you are writing to someone, be it a King/Queen of the Castle, or a software company, please remember to include an SAE. I am very aware of how much postage can cost, so if you are a little short, you could write to me for help and I will try to publish the answer in the "Ask a Simple Question?" page, which will definitely be in the next issue!.....Barbara

RECIPE FOR A GOOD ADVENTURE

by June Rowe

INGREDIENTS:-

Any number of locations.

Puzzles in a ratio of approx. 1 puzzle to 5 locations.

Objects - a good scattering.

Responses - enough to cover all objects.

Hints - a liberal sprinkling.

METHOD:

Map locations, making sure that UP does not clash with SOUTH from a northern spot.

Add descriptive text, using short words in preference to long ones.

(NOTE - *some hints may be mixed in with text if so desired.*)

Mix in objects to be found lying around or hidden. (If hidden, container should be mentioned in text.)

Stir in responses, shaped to give helpful answers to inputs.

Examine the mixture to ensure that puzzles appear at appropriate intervals.

Place the mixture in a QUILL, GAC or PAW utility, adding remaining hints in the form of remarks or HELP responses.

A maze may be added, but as players have been known to indulge in screaming fits when encountering one, it is safest to leave it out.

Red herrings may also be added, but these sometimes create an unpleasant flavour, so should, generally, be omitted.

Allow the mixture to stew for some time.

If it appears to gel correctly, send it to a play-tester.

On receipt of a good report, submit the game to a software house of your choice, together with a map and a solution.

If accepted and put on the market, a game made by following this recipe will engender a certain amount of fame, but not a lot of financial gain!

LETTERS - edited by JUNE ROWE

TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

From JUNE ROWE, Letters Editor.....

Ted Bugler thought that I edited the letters in the July issue, so here are extracts from his letter to Barbara and her reply, just in case any other readers are confused.

From E.F.BUGLER, of Farnborough, Hants to Barbara.....

As you imply in your editorial it is essential, if Probe is to remain viable in changing times, that it gives subscribers what they want and that was the main thrust of my letter to Mandy, which was published with a footnote from June Rowe. I must say that your plea for feedback on which to base your plans for Probe contrasts rather forcibly with June's suggestion that I switch to a different magazine if I don't like this one! Nevertheless I am undaunted by June's comment and enclose a cheque by way of continuing support and will send written contributions from time to time. My hope is that Probe will continue to adapt to changing trends in gaming as it was beginning to do under Mandy's editorship, with further development of the 16 bit and role-playing coverage as more members upgrade and move away from text adventures as the sole basis of their gaming.

From Barbara to Ted.....

Many thanks for your letter and cheque. The comment in the July issue is mine as June only takes over as Letters Editor from the next issue. You will probably be very disappointed to hear that I don't like strategy games, and from the comments I have had in letters and telephone calls, the RPG and Strategy column isn't read by many subscribers, but they say that think it should stay as long as I get material to publish. This may be a problem in a few months' time unless I receive new contributions soon. I know from the returned subscription forms that many readers have more than one computer, usually a mixture of 8-bit and 16-bit like yourself. Until I get round to sending out the inevitable questionnaire, I won't know which is the one they spend most time on, but I can't help wondering why they hold on to them if they aren't used. I certainly wouldn't dream of getting rid of my BBC or Commodore or Spectrum just because I also happen to have an Atari. Until I became editor of Adventure Probe the latter stood idle most of the time - occasionally used by the family to play arcade games. Now, its main function is as a word processor. Despite the fact that I have an extensive collection of commercial and P.D. software, not much has been of sufficient interest. I, for one, would be interested to hear what YOU play, on which computer. Perhaps it would dispel the impression that you wish Adventure Probe to become a predominantly RPG/Strategy magazine rather than one for the text/graphic adventurer who may occasionally (like the Grue) dabble in role-playing. In my editorial, I will put out a plea for contributions for all computers, and I was thinking of asking for details about other specialist magazines, commercial and home-produced, which may interest the readers, so maybe someone knows of one that concentrates on strategy rather than text or menu-driven adventures.

See also my reply to Barbara Bassingthwaite's letter, which was written up before I received these two from Barbara. (June)

From TIM KEMP, of FB and YS.....

A while back in Probe, Major Beardwell commented that he'd had no reply to a letter he'd written requesting help from Your Sinclair (Adventures). The reason that he'd had no reply was that I'd had no mail sent on to me from YS. It had been a long while since they send me any mail, but that was due, I thought, to the fact that a lot of people know my home address and know that sending mail to YS to be passed on to the Adventure Columnist (that's me!) takes a long while, so they send it directly to me and bypass the "long wait" scenario. However, a while back, I had a 'phone call from Jon Pillar (YS Staff writer) to ask if I'd had any mail recently. I explained to him that I get a reasonable amount sent directly to me from YS readers etc. He said that they had just found a sackful of adventure mail that should have been sent to me a long, long time ago. He duly popped it in the post and it took me the best part of two weeks to sort through it and send out replies. I can assure you that Major B's letter was replied to ... can't remember if I was able to help him though. Some of the letters enclosed in this sack of mail were several months old, so to make up for the wait that most people had to endure in receiving replies to their letters I approached the lovable and utterly cuddly John Wilson and he allowed me to send out a special offer sheet (containing masses of discounts on Zenobi adventures) which was a sort of "sorry for the delay" offer. So there you are, Major B. I wasn't ignoring you, it was just the fact that the mail was late! Hope that explains things. (Dare say the above scenario will also apply in the future too?)

*

Would you like Probe to print your home address, Tim, so that our readers can avoid the "long wait" too? (June)

* * * * *

From DIANE RICE, of Weymouth.....

What a thrill to receive Adventure Probe once more. The only worry I have is that on the cover of the first Probe I ever received was a picture of this Amazon type lady complete with high boots, bow and quiver full of arrows. From then on I always had that as my mental picture of Mandy. Looking at the latest cover I'm not at all sure that I would want to meet Barbara!

*

Shame to shatter your illusions - Mandy is short and cuddly! That could apply to Barbara, too - both very nice people. Possibly the facial expression on the cover could portray Barbara saying "Who? Me?" when someone suggested that she should take on the editorship! (June)

Very true, except I don't wear ear-rings. In fact it was the only picture I had, but that doesn't detract from its quality and relevance, for many of us feel like the lady in the picture. I shouldn't do anything with June's section except type it out, but this is an excellent opportunity to put the record straight on the picture I think Diane is referring to. If it is the one on the cover of the November 1991 issue, it is by PETER COLLINS, brother of Tony. By coincidence I have just been advised that he was a little peeved at being referred to as "Tony's brother" but he may do more now I have given him his belated credit. (Barbara)

From STEVE CLAY, South Hirral....

I am writing in response to the letter from Ted Bugler regarding the imbalance between 16-bit and 8-bit items within the pages of Probe. Why is there so little input from 16-bit owners? I think the problem stems from the cost of software for the two formats. To explain: The Amiga owner buys MONKEY ISLAND 2 at £30.00. This amount, I think it would be fair to assume, would account for the larger part of any player's software budget, whereas the Spectrum owner could expect at least 15 games for the same amount of money. Also the 16-bit owner is going to be much more careful where his/her £30.00 is spent, while the 8-bit user has the chance to try out many different products without any great risk. This leads to a situation where the 16-bit owners buy the games that are heavily recommended in magazines. So you have a small knot of games that most people buy and any reviews that the players write are of the same product. The 8-bit scene, however, has a larger user base playing a wider range of products. Ted also refers to the Spectrum and the adventures that are produced for it, saying that the days are numbered for the Spectrum. That may be so if you are looking at the arcade side of it. Not so adventures. Due to the long shelf life of adventures and the strength of the home grown market (which Ted grossly underestimates) even when games are no longer available in the shops and magazines are no longer produced for sale in the newsagents, people will still be playing THE LORDS OF TIME and THE HOBBIT. The adventure scene has been poorly served by the big companies for so long that adventurers expect to order games mail order and buy specialist magazines such as Probe to cater for their needs. As a point of interest, according to one source or another the Spectrum has been on its last legs since 1986. While low price/high quality software is available, the Spectrum may well be the adventurers' machine. For the record I own a couple of Spectrums and a brand new A600.

*

I think you've hit the nail on the head there about the difference in the price of games; also, there are hundreds of Spectrums in use, but as yet, only a much smaller number of Amigas. Makes me wonder, though - why ARE Amiga games so expensive? (June)

* * * * *

From DOT VAUGHAN, of Soton, Hants....

I expect I am only repeating what a lot of other Probe readers will be saying, but I was so happy when my copy dropped through the letterbox this morning that I actually gave a cheer, much to the amusement of a visiting friend. I promptly sat down and read it from cover to cover. I am delighted to say that I found it as entertaining and as informative as ever and I am pleased, unlike E.F.Bugler to see that it remains unchanged. Keep up the good work.

*

We'll certainly try to, Dot, and I think Barbara feels as I do, that with such wonderful support from readers like yourself, it won't be too difficult. (June)

From BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE, of Yeovil, Somerset.....

I received the Probe today and I was glad to see it hadn't changed much. I did like the section called "Ask a simple question?" I very often get asked the same question about certain games.

I like Probe just the way it is. I read the letter from E.F.Bugler. The thing is why doesn't he write an article and see what the feed back is? Then he could get something rolling. After all, you can only print what is sent in. Maybe he should start his own magazine.

*

Well, there you are. Mr. Bugler - I know you said you wanted to read other people's ideas, not your own, but your letter generated responses, didn't it? Maybe an article would encourage other 16-bit owners to send in their ideas. In the meantime, does anyone know of a magazine just for 16-bit owners, or of one which concentrates on RPG and strategy games? (June)

* * * * *

From Mr.H. DIXON, 62 Windsor Street, COLNE, Lancs. BB8 9LD

I have been developing a text adventure for the CBM 64 with the aid of GAC, our excellent new editor Barbara, and several other notable and most excellent play-testers, for some time. The game, which I call ZARGO CASTLE, and covers almost a full side of a 5.25" disk, is nearing completion now, and will hopefully be ready and on sale before the end of the year.

Looking back, discounting time for illness (of which I've had plenty) I reckon I have spent two years on this adventure. It seems a long time, but one must bear in mind it's a first attempt. I had to learn the system of GAC+ first and then develop a style. I like to do things properly (or try to) but I think the end result will be worth it. The thing is - progress it slow! I have started work on another adventure, and am nearing completion of the first section. I thought that with it taking so long to develop these games, maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea to enlist help at an earlier stage, rather than wait until it is completed.

So I am asking anyone out there who is interested - would you be willing to help me to develop the adventure, by testing it a section at a time as I write it? It would be an interesting experiment, and could produce promising results - I have a vivid imagination and many ideas which I am willing to try out, and will listen to any advice you care to offer.

The CBM is short on adventures - let's boost it! So if you are interested and have a 64 with disk drive, write and let me know.

*

CALLING COMMODORE OWNERS! I hope you get a useful response to your letter, Mr. Dixon - You will let me know if you do. Won't you? By the way, why so formal? What does the H stand for? (June)

* * * * *

CRIME TIME

Published by Starbyte, reviewed by Ian Osborne on an Amiga

It was a terrible night. Rain poured from a moonless sky, which was frequently split by shafts of lightning - I never thought I'd be glad to reach my seedy, two-bit hotel, but when I saw the tacky neon sign that flashed weakly above the door my sense of relief was overwhelming. Again the sky filled with an electric glow, lighting the garbage-strewn alley leading to the hotel door. Wiping the rain from my face, I - what was that? A shadowy figure, a glint of steel, footsteps in the night! Startled by my sudden appearance he turned and fled, leaving a blood-soaked corpse as a grisly reminder of his night's work. Fearing for my life I escape to the safety of my hotel room, heart pounding as I locked and chained the door. Little did I realize I was soon to become the police's prime suspect.

Ripping stuff eh? The animated introduction gives a real sense of urgency and tension, which the game then ruins completely! A shoddy attempt at updating the text adventure, CRIME TIME constructs sentences from mouse-driven menus. Nice idea, but it doesn't really work - the range of verbs is pitifully small, leaving you totally in the hands of the computer. No matter what you see in the (very average) graphic, you can only interact with the items listed in the menus, probably through a grammatical disaster such as "activate chessboard with friend Roger". With such a limited, program-led range of inputs you'll soon be trying actions not because they seem like a good idea but simply because they're available. Perhaps it's just as well - the problems in CRIME TIME range from the ridiculous, obscure to the downright illogical, e.g. to find a piece of paper that's stuck to your shoe you have to take a shower with your clothes on (I wish I were kidding, but I'm not.) Adventures should be about exploring your environment, looking for useful items, applying objects and knowledge to solving problems, etc. Too many puzzles in CRIME TIME are just a matter of trial and error.

The final nail in CRIME TIME'S coffin is that it makes no attempt to create a world. All sense of urgency and suspense is destroyed by the feeble message texts - all feeling of being is lost, reducing the game to a series of problems to solve for their own sake. Pointless or unsuccessful actions are "rewarded" with huge dollops of sarcasm. This might be funny if used sparingly, but reading the same lame gags every two or three messages is a real grind. The humour is very sexist and leatorial, completely out of place in a murder whodunnit, and to cap it all the hotel is full of idiot guests who stand and watch while you ransack their rooms!

I could go on about the spelling mistakes (elisionic), negating, and the programming bug that locks the game if you try to walk through a closed door, but I won't. Suffice to say CRIME TIME is a terrible game and totally unworthy of the title adventure. This PC adventure is so restrictive it feels like swimming in a straight jacket, the atmosphere's non-existent, and the puzzles depend more on guesswork than brainpower. Pick up all the clues and you'll get your man. Miss a few and you'll probably get him anyway - a little guesswork goes a long way in CRIME TIME.

HUMBUG

Written & published by Graham Cluley

Reviewed by Neil Shipman on a PC

(also runs on an Atari ST or Amiga with PC emulator)

The school holidays have come round again and Mum has sent you, Sidney Widdershins, to spend a few days with your Grandad at Attervist Manor. From the unopened Christmas card still wedged in the letterbox it doesn't look as if he's expecting you and, indeed, you find the old duffer fast asleep in his armchair by the fireside. The letter resting in his lap turns out to be from the solicitors of his neighbour, dentist Jasper Slake, who it seems is pressurizing Gramps into parting with the manor at a knockdown price and moving into an Old Folks' Home. Slake knows that the old boy is heavily in debt and considers his behaviour bordering on lunacy, especially with his mutterings about treasure being hidden in the grounds. Now Grandad, who insists on dressing up as Napoleon, is certainly eccentric, but he is something of an inventor too. Perhaps he hasn't completely lost his marbles and there really is a grain of truth to his ramblings. In any event, with nothing better to do over the holiday you decide to search for the treasure and see if you can help Grandad out of a fix.

Exploring the manor and its grounds turns out to be great fun as you come across all sorts of weird and wonderful contraptions, creatures and characters. There's Kevin, the camp clockwork shark who resides in the pantry and won't let you take a caddy off the shelf until you smarten yourself up. There's an octopus.. resplendent in green eyeshade and clutching a dweezer, who delights in beating you at Wubble-A-Gloop. Sven Thangywesssen, a filofax-carrying Viking is to be found on a vessel in the lake while his compatriot, Olaf Yggdrasil, lies drunk and depressed in a strange waiting room underground. The gardener, Horace, doesn't like you dropping items in the Yaffle maze and he certainly isn't going to let you take that can of petrol from his shed.

What does Alex, the armed hacker standing by the computer in his smart green anorak, want from you? How can you get Grandad's cat, Schrödinger, to follow you? And what does the aardvark, clad in a silver lame zoot suit and asleep on the washing machine, need so that it can communicate. But my favourite must be the wumpus, a cuddly ball of a creature covered in soft pink fur. The poor thing scrabbles pathetically, trapped inside a long perspex tube which rises to the surface from a crypt below. Imagine how I felt when, in trying to rescue it, I shot it sky-high on a blast of compressed air. Here's what it looked like from ground level:

"The ground shakes violently.. With a loud whoosh something small and furry rockets up from the tube. With a loud squeal of fear the cuddly bundle rises high into the air and flies off in a perfect parabola far off to the east."

Somehow, though, I didn't think that was the last I'd seen of it and, sure enough, my wumpus-saving technique was put severely to the test later on!

Grandad's most amazing invention is the time machine which is found in the passages under the manor. A large number of items, many of which would prove useful in your search, are held in the past, displayed in closed cases. Getting transported back in time by way of a (thankfully non-homicidal) beechwood armchair is easy. Working out how to transfer everything you need from past to present is another matter entirely.

The adventure has nearly 100 locations and twice that many items and, as you would expect, contains an amazing number of puzzles. These range from obvious to downright convoluted and the clever interweaving of many of them just goes to show what a fiendish mind and programming ability the author possesses. It pays to ask characters about things and also to wait around and see what they get up to. But be warned: triggering off some actions early in the game and failing to note and deal with their consequences will prevent you from succeeding much later on. The parser is friendly and, with a huge vocabulary, you should have no trouble finding the right input. If all else fails, though, try giving everything you've got to a character in order to obtain a useful response.

As in Graham Cluley's previous adventure, Jacaranda Jim, you can scroll through and edit your last 10 commands with the cursor keys. An additional thoughtful touch in HUMBUG is the provision of a configuration program to change the display colours, and Ramsave is also supported. Mapping is easy with exits always being specified and, when you buy the game or register your shareware copy, you are even given a map of all the locations - plus the very necessary solution to the Yaffle maze. Registered versions also contain some extra (non-adventure) shareware games. Graham Cluley is a master of the absurd. In HUMBUG he combines witty, off-beat descriptions with challenging yet logical problems. It is not, perhaps, an adventure for novices but it will delight more experienced puzzlers who are looking for something to get their teeth into. It could take many amusing, frustrating weeks to finish - and I bet you can't manage it without asking for help!

Price: £9 for 5.25"/3.5" disk. Cheques payable to Graham Cluley, "Malvern", Seaton Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3NG

I DARE YOU Reviewed by Steve Clay on a Spectrum

I DARE YOU was written by Louise Wenlock for Pegasus Software. The game is supplied with three sealed brown envelopes labelled: pink card, yellow card and blue card. At various points during the game you are asked to open the envelope and refer to the enclosed card. While not a new idea, this generates interest in the game even before it has loaded. This is just as well for The Guild have seen fit to put a Hermitage demo on the A-side of the tape and I had wandered off while the game loaded! Having finally loaded I DARE YOU (IDY) you are treated to the game credits which fade in and out nicely. I was annoyed to see that the author had not credited PAW as the writing system used (more so as the author claims to have programmed the game!).

Anyway, on with the show. You are then asked if you wish to read the story (Yes or No) I typed Y and received the reply Pardon?? I typed YES and the story was revealed in all its glory:

You have been moaning about the lack of real adventure in your life. Your friend informs you that his/her aunt is away for a couple of weeks and while she is away your friend is willing to set up a collection of puzzles for you to solve. With you doing your best to back out you are challenged with the infamous I DARE YOU! How can you refuse? Your friend needs a week to set everything up and then it's game on!

You are then asked if you want instructions, YES (see I'm Learning!) and the instructions are revealed. You can use QL/QS for Ramload/Ramsave, X for Examine and you are told to look in, behind and under things. These instructions, however, are responsible for one of the biggest headaches of the game. You are informed that due to the number of keys and boxes and other similar articles you need to use the word with the capital letter (EH!). To clarify, should you find an Iron key, you GET IRDN. (It would have been easier to say adjective, but there you go). This is a good idea to avoid confusion and has been used successfully in other games, however due to the way PAW lists objects in text it gets rid of the capital letter! (Jack Lockerby gave an example of how to get around this in his Wizard Works article in the April 1991 issue of Probe). This isn't the worst of it. The author has not stuck to the rules during the game and this is a serious flaw. For example: you come across a large box, so following the instructions I entered X LARGE, "nothing of interest" was the reply. Fortunately I tried X BOX, just as well as I found an item that is vital to the completion of the game. Later I found a sewing box, X BOX revealed nothing yet X SEWING rewarded me with two more objects. If you change the rules at least stick to the changes!

Apart from the opening few locations all the action takes place within the house and garden of the holidaying aunt. You begin in your own home with a letter from your friend informing you that all is ready. After finding a taxi you need to solve the riddle on the pink card to find the address of the house. I am not a great adventurer, I struggle with most games, so to see my score rattling up to 33% on my first go was wonderful. It was around here I hit a snag and couldn't make further progress without a helpsheet. One glance at this and I was on my way again. I checked the helpsheet only once more and then only to see if I had solved an anagram correctly. I had but I can't make head nor tail of the word! I would point out here that although the anagram is 13 letters long PAW only needs the first 5 letters, therefore having 13 letters appears pointless.

The run in to the finish involves the numerous items you have picked up and their shape. What happens is that you end up with a boring sequence of moves. This doesn't matter too much as you are looking forward to the end of the game. Having completed the game you are told to look out for I DARE YOU AGAIN, the sequel due out in a few months time. IDY is a good game for beginners. There is a lot that can be done very easily and the score going up is the best incentive you can have. There are a couple of unusual verbs but patience should sort these out. There is a HELP command that gives a cryptic clue in each room.

The game came with a note from Tony Collins saying that it was "extremely good". The fact is, there are several careless errors that let the game down. An example is at the front door to the house - you are told EXITS: nothing. There is a kettle that you can't get and the habit early on in the game is to automatically take an object but not tell the player. This results in you forever checking your inventory to see if you have got the article. I look forward to IDY AGAIN, but hope that a second or third playtester is used. Maybe then the careless mistakes will be picked up. All in all well worth the entry fee!

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SHERIFF GUNN

Reviewed by Gareth Pitchford on a Sam Coupe

It's time to go back to the year of 1880, and "The Wild West", for this new Sam adventure by Mark Turner of Samurai Software. The town of Rock Ridge is plagued by the evil outlaw Poisonous Pete and only one man is good enough for the job. His name is Marshall Axe, a tough, sharpshooting law enforcer. Unfortunately he has better things to do than save a two-bit town like Rock Ridge, and so the task to get rid of Pete falls upon the town sheriff - Sheriff Gunn. Gunn, although no genius, knows the old proverb "Safety in numbers", so he decides to form a posse to catch Pete; and this is where you come in, playing the part of the good Sheriff.

You start in your office. The top of the screen shows a small but very colourful picture of the location while next to that is the location code (more about that later) and the usual game title, etc. The graphic in the office location shows a Sam sitting on top of your desk. EXAMINE SAM produces the response - "Oops, A bit of an anachronism slipping in there". Going north takes you next to your jail. Inside is the town Mayor. He had been arrested the night before for being drunk and disorderly, and would like you to let him out, but where is the key? You have no time to worry about that, for your deputy soon appears and tells you that Pete has robbed the bank! Looks like you'd best get your posse formed rather sharpish!

Getting people to join your posse involves doing good deeds for them. Your deputy, for example, has left his wedding ring in the bedroom of the proprietor of the local saloon. As you can guess, this could be rather embarrassing if his wife found out! Then, there's the blacksmith, who wants you to find his children - they went out to play a few hours ago and haven't yet returned. Rock Ridge is quite large, with over 50 location to explore, and there's plenty of characters wandering round who will give you tasks to perform.

Once you've got all 7 people needed for the posse it's onto part two. This takes place in a separate load, though no password is needed to play it. Due to unforeseen circumstances, you are on your own again and must track down and kill Pete yourself. Watch out for the snakes and other desert perils, though!

The text is mildly humorous, though sometimes tends to be a bit clumsy in places. The characters are dealt with very well. They will wander in and out of locations, you can talk to them, and they each have a definite personality. SHERIFF GUNN is actually written in Sam BASIC - though it runs so fast that this doesn't make any difference at all. The amount of special commands is huge. You can RUN TO a specific location, to save time, by RUN TO (location code). You can FIND a character. RAMSAVE/RAMLOAD are catered for, and the usual GET ALL and DROP ALL commands are included. Graphics can be turned on and off, and you can change the game colours or the font to a presentation that suits you. The function keys save typing often used commands, and for the lazy among you, you can even use the cursor keys as opposed to the normal compass command inputs. With quite good graphics, 64 column text, 80 locations and over 20 other characters, SHERIFF GUNN is quite impressive. Seasoned adventurers will make steady progress, as the puzzles aren't that hard, but it makes an excellent beginners introduction to adventuring and will, hopefully, succeed in getting more Sam owners interested in adventures.

If you've got a Sam then this game is well worth getting. If you haven't then maybe SHERIFF GUNN, and the other adventures being released soon for the Sam will encourage you to buy one.

Available on Sam Coupe disk - Price £9.99 from Sam Computers Ltd., Lakeside, Phoenix Way, Swansea Enterprise Park, Swansea, SA7 9EH, and all good Sam stockists.

THE TAXMAN COMETH

Written by Steve Clay, reviewed by Jay Honosutomo on an Amstrad

Being a tax collector isn't a particularly enjoyable job, as you can imagine. Not a lot of people would spend all day taking money from other people (then again, some people would). Even so, a taxman you are and a taxman you'll stay. At least, if you get through the latest task set for you by HQ. You must travel to Tripe on the Wold and collect/demand taxes from six reluctant payers who live in the area. Not any ordinary residents, though, as you'll find out when you meet each and every one of them. I mean, Odnoch the wizard, Halfpint the giant, Topper the warrior, Jeff the author, Lofty the dwarf and Phoebe the dragon are all very tough nuts to crack indeed

Steve has used PAW for his first attempt at writing an adventure, and to say I enjoyed the game would be an understatement. I thought the plot was great. A really well written/thoughtout storyline can add buckets to the enjoyment of a game.

The puzzles are nothing short of fantastic. There are a couple of MENSA-style mathematical/manipulation puzzles in there and I loved them. The puzzle involving the tiles is really devilish and can take you ages to work out (that's why Steve has included a cheat option to skip it if you like!). Not everyone will like these types of puzzles, but for those who do, they are fine examples of the genre. There's more than a touch of humour thrown in too. The responses and descriptions are very funny at times. The game is absolutely bug-free, as you would expect from WoW's unparalleled playtester, Lorna Paterson.

Overall, THE TAXMAN COMETH is an absolute gem of a game. Great puzzles combine with a well-written storyline to produce an excellent adventure. Go and buy a copy. NOW!

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This adventure was originally published for the Spectrum. It is a difficult and absorbing adventure to play, but very satisfying when you solve one of the six mini-adventures and force the tax avoider to pay up. I could have published a review, by Gareth Pitchford, of the Spectrum version, but it says very much the same but in greater detail, so you'll have to take Jay's and my word for its merits...better still, buy it and see for yourself.....Barbara

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THE VIOLATOR OF VOODOO
Written by The Traveller in Black
Reviewed by Gareth Pitchford on a Spectrum

The great temporal struggle between the evil might of the Abomination and Chronos's Time Crusaders continues. The island of Santo Barbaro in the Caribbean has been overrun by the demons of the Primal Darkness. Chronos has no choice but to send two of his crusaders to fight the evil menace this time - Kane of The Cloudlands and yourself, Phoenix.

So you start on the island, inhabited by followers of that often misunderstood religion - Voodoo. In the distance you can hear the islanders, under the influence of the Abomination, chanting in an unknown tongue. The island is rather vast and there's a few blocked locations due to monsters and zombies etc. You'll also come across various tortured children. In a small gully there's a headless body, while tied to a boulder on the edge of a cliff is another demented child. Something tells me that helping them isn't going to be easy.

It's a good idea to make an accurate map of the island, as it is large and you need to be able to get from one place to another quite easily. Eventually you should come across the two religious leaders of the island. The first, the HDUN'GAN (Priest) doesn't seem to be able to help you too much, due to the minor fact that he's dead. The MAMBO (Priestess) is more use and is the key character in the game. She will guide your actions on the island, telling you what you need to do next and what objects to bring her. Talking of objects, there's plenty of them about. They range from the ordinary type (bowl, sledge-hammer, etc.) to objects associated with Voodoo. Things like assoms (a rattle) and assens (iron rod on a plate). Watch out, though, many objects are breakable so don't drop them willy-nilly.

Completing THE VIOLATOR OF VOODOO will definitely challenge you, as Phoenix. Don't expect too much help from Kane, your fellow Time Crusader; when you find him he'll be in a rather bad way. He also asks you to do something unusual (!?) to him, though if you remember the end of the last game and also the very nature of a Crusader's life it isn't really too unexpected.

This island is wonderfully described. The author has really taken time on the game and has painted a realistic picture. There's many references to the Voodoo religion (the common terms of which are described on the information sheet with the game) and, after a visit to the local library to get out a book on the subject, everything checks out perfectly.

The presentation has gone up several notches since PHOENIX. There's none of the slapdash, badly formatted messages this time round. The screen layout is clear, with the location descriptions at the top, split from the rest of the text by a line of UDG's. The parser is excellent on the whole, though in a few cases it maybe asks you to be a bit more specific.

THE VIOLATOR OF VOODOO is an excellent game which should prove a challenge for the whole spectrum of adventure players. The pace is leisurely and beginners won't find themselves rushed by the whole thing, while the more advanced adventurer should make good progress but still find themselves scratching their heads on several occasions. I enjoyed it much more than PHOENIX. My opinion? Buy it.

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DRAGONSLAYER

Written by Martin Freemantle

Reviewed by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum

Long ago when man edged his way past the borders of Bogwoppit he was confronted with the Goblins, who had ruled since the beginning of time. The years that followed were ravaged by many wars, until a great warlock named Rexel (like my stapler!) formed the circle of nine whose members created the Medallion from a range of elements - earth, water, wind and flame to name but a few. When worn the Medallion can protect, and also control the elements and so must never fall into the hands of the evil Goblins. You, Doug Thornton learn from your dead father's letter about the Silver Dragon who struck up an alliance with the Red Goblins, resulting in them raiding the Circle of Nine and stealing the Medallion of Immortality. DRAGON SLAYER is your struggle to recover the stolen object.

Your adventure starts on a dusty track through the forest. You soon discover a nasty Goblin guards the rope-bridge, the only way across a deep ravine. A few tricky puzzles later and you are outside a log cabin, which you can spend all day trying to enter via the door, and still not succeed. Your time would be better spent exploring the rocky terrain until you find a tunnel which has one surprise after another, also a few points of "no return" just to keep you alert. Much more is in front of you, leading you ever closer to the mountain where the Silver Dragon lives. Dragons (or is it the work of the Goblins) must be very clever for the entrance is well disguised, and when you do get inside you will meet many more challenges, and a maze which isn't too large or difficult. The game finishes when you find and use the Medallion to escape from the mountain, but the next part, DEATH OR GLORY, is promised soon.

Like most journey storylines, DRAGON SLAYER is very linear, but one word of warning, don't be in too much of a hurry to dash up stairs or along passages as it is likely you will miss an object or hidden exit.

Originally written as a 128K adventure, it is also available as a two-part 48K game, with a couple of objects in different places and only a few walkthrough locations missing. Also absent is the surprise response to CLIMB ROPE near the beginning, but no other differences of importance that I noticed. In both versions the location text is adequate rather than verbose (that is the way I like it), this leaves ample memory for the more important messages and programming. All the usual PAW facilities are available, including, of course, saving to memory and tape, but in the latter you have to LOAD GAME when restoring your position to distinguish it from LOAD CROSSBOW. Typing STORY gives you a chance to read details of the hero's background, VOCAB gives a list of basic words, and INFO gives you a list of abbreviations with X for EXAMINE and SR for SEARCH the two most useful. Don't expect too much from typing START - it gives the plan of only the first seven locations, but at least it will give you an idea of where to start your map. I bet many writers wish their first adventure was or will be as good as DRAGON SLAYER. Available from the author's own company: DREAM WORLD ADVENTURES,

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TADS: THE TEXT ADVENTURE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

by Michael J. Roberts of High Energy Software

Part 2 of an interview by Neil Shipman

What is the TADS Debugger?

One of the features we introduced with the new version of TADS is source-level debugging. With the TADS Debugger you can much more quickly get a feel for how a TADS game works, and it should be a big help in getting a game working. The Debugger allows you to step through the source code of your program as it executes, set a breakpoint so you can stop execution at a particular point, and evaluate and even change the values of variables in the game while it's running.

You don't have to do anything special to your game to debug it apart from adding an option to the command to compile your game. The Debugger is just a separate program that acts like the run-time system but gives you direct control over the game's execution.

TADS runs on several systems. How difficult is it to port a game from one system to another?

The TADS languages on all of our systems are identical. All you have to do is transfer the source file from one system to another, recompile it, and you're done. There's no need to make any changes to the game source at all.

Many adventurers are put off text adventures because of a poor parser. The TADS parser is extremely good - did you pay particular attention to this?

One of the big advantages of using a system like TADS rather than writing adventures in a general-purpose language is that the system does the hard work of parsing player commands for you. So, one of the areas we spent a lot of time on with TADS was the player command parser. When you write a game with TADS, your game automatically understands multiple objects in a single command (for example, "take the key, go north, and unlock the door"), special words like "it" ("unlock the door and open it") and "all" ("put everything except the book in the box"), and a lot more. These things are totally invisible to a TADS game - the system handles them all automatically, and breaks them down into simple commands for the game.

Our goal was to be able to handle any command that any other adventure game could handle, but we were able to even do a little better in a few areas. For example, I haven't seen any other games that can handle plurals properly; with TADS you can say "take the books", and the system will do just that. Also, TADS understands "them" properly, which I haven't seen elsewhere. It's also a lot more flexible with conjunctions, so you can say things like "take the box and the ball and go north". These are small details, but I felt that the more flexible the parser could be, the better.

The Author's Manual plus the heavily documented data file with Ditch Day Drifter make TADS easy to understand and use. How many years has it taken to put this all together?

I wrote the manual concurrently with writing the system, so it's hard to say just how much time went into it. I spent several weekends cleaning it up and organizing it towards the end of the project.

Ditch Day Drifter was written remarkably quickly, especially considering the huge amount of time that DSD took. It took me a few days to design most of the game and a couple of weeks to implement it. A few friends play-tested it over the next few weeks and I spent some more time cleaning it up. It probably took two months in all. Of course, it's not a very big game.

When did you set up High Energy Software with Steve McAdams?

High Energy Software was set up officially at the point we were about to release TADS and Deep Space Drifter, which was September 1990. It had unofficially existed for the entire DSD project, but it didn't have a name during that time.

High Energy Software is still a "garage" operation. Steve and I both have real jobs, since at this point High Energy Software barely pays for its own operations (as long as you don't include our time in the bill). Despite our small size and hopeless understaffing, we're trying our best to provide commercial-quality software and support. We hope that we'll be able to work on High Energy full-time at some point, but it doesn't appear that this will happen in the near future.

Shareware keeps costs low. Do you get a good response from players registering their copies of the Drifter adventures?

Games don't seem to get very good shareware response. Deep is the only one of our games that's shareware (Ditch is "freeware"). Given that games undoubtedly have a wider appeal than the development system, and looking at download statistics, it's pretty clear that the user-to-registered-user ratio for Deep is considerably worse than TADS, which has done reasonably well.

We think that most of the registrations we've received for Deep were sent in because the person was registering TADS and went ahead and added in Deep while they were at it. So, our experience with Deep, although not that good, has probably been a lot better than that of most other game shareware authors. This is consistent with what we've heard from a couple of other shareware game authors. The authors of the Unnkulian Unnventure games, for example, have said that they're receiving very few registrations for their games; it's a shame, because their games are clearly in the same league as Infocom's best, and I'd like to see more games from them.

It's kind of unfortunate that more people don't register shareware games but it doesn't really surprise me. I'm sure the main reason that anyone registers TADS is that it's a big, complex system, so you really need the manual to take full advantage of it. With games, you don't usually get much when you register (we send a hint book and maps to people that register DSD, but you can get through the game without them), so there's not much incentive.

How much do the improvements in the latest version of TADS reflect user feedback?

Most of the new features are things users requested. Some ideas we came up with on our own, like the Debugger, but mostly we were trying to provide the features that our users said they needed. We certainly have a lot more on our enhancement request list for the next revision.

As animation, graphics, sound and music push adventures from interactive fiction towards interactive movies, what future do you see for the text adventure?

As far as the computer game industry is concerned, the text adventure is dead. Steve Meretzky's company is the only one that's producing anything similar any more, and even their new games are illustrated - and even with that, I doubt they'd make it to retail shelves if it weren't for Meretzky's name and track record.

I think that pure text adventures could still sell - maybe not as well as Wing Commander XXIV or Space Quest LXXXVII, but enough to keep a company in business. The reason no one does write text adventures is that the computer game industry is entirely blockbuster-driven right now. This is mostly because there's so little shelf space on anything less than a premium-priced best-seller. This forces the game publishers to make every game bigger, flashier and sexier than the last, and encourage them to publish sequels to previous winners rather than gambling on unknown new games.

The reason shelf space is so limited right now is that the market is so small. The last figures I've seen put the disk-based computer game market at about a tenth the size of the cartridge-based game market (Nintendo and the like). Presumably, the market will grow as computers become more common in the home, and with that growth I think we'll see shelf space become much more accessible to smaller, less costly products. When that happens, text adventures may make a comeback. It'll be a while, though.

There is a TADS compiler and run-time system for MS-DOS, Atari ST and Apple Mac computers. Will you be developing these for the Amiga?

We don't have any immediate plans to support the Amiga. Supporting our three current platforms is already as much work as we can comfortably handle; it would eat too much into the limited time we have for new work if we added more. So, while we'd like to add more platforms, we don't have the resources for doing so right now.

What plans does High Energy Software have for the next year?

We have a number of new projects in the works, although it's always hard to know when or if any of them will be finished. I'm rewriting the TADS compiler and run-time system in order to support an integrated development environment which we think would make it substantially easier to write a game with TADS. We've been doing some exploratory work on supporting graphics and sound in TADS games; we don't expect to be writing any graphical games ourselves because we don't have the artistic talent to produce the necessary pictures, but some of our more ambitious users may enjoy being able to add graphics to their games. We'd also like to write some more games and we have a couple of ideas that we're developing.

We've been thinking about installing a bulletin-board system dedicated to TADS support and text adventure gaming in general. Right now we're doing all of our support through CompuServe and GENie, but it would be better to have our own system. We've also been trying to find a way of creating a commercial text adventure distribution channel of our own.

Our goal is to be working on High Energy Software full-time. We don't expect that we'll be able to do so anytime soon, unfortunately, so our projects will have to continue at the same slow pace.

How do people get in touch with you for more information about TADS?

We can be reached at PO Box 50422, Palo Alto, California 94303 (USA). Electronic mail users can reach us through CompuServe (user ID 73737.417) or GENie (M.ROBERTS10). Internet users can reach us at 73737.417@compuserve.com.

NEWS SECTION

SAD NEWS

Joan and Maurice Pancott regret they will not be able to attend the Convention as Joan has had to enter hospital. I know they were looking forward to meeting old and new friends. We all send our best wishes to you both, and hope Joan's condition improves soon.

* * * * *

NORTHERN UNDERGROUND

It seems the company who processes the mail sent to the Top Floor, 17 Fisher Street, Carlisle, may have been slow to forward it to their client. If anyone still hasn't received their order please write directly to:

37 Millriggs, Corby Hill, Carlisle, CA4 8QP

* * * * *

MORE ADVENTURES FOR THE +3

Zenobi Software have been very busy converting as many titles as possible to the +3 format. They will be supplied on disk and will load from disk but because they were constructed on antiquated utilities like the QUILL or GAC (John's wording, not mine..Ed) it will still be necessary to resort to the use of a tape deck to save and load your "saved" positions, but this way will eliminate "loading errors" and loading time will be reduced dramatically. Zenobi will attempt to convert any game on their present list for only an extra £1.49 over and above the listed price of the tape version. Even AURA-SCOPE, a massive 128K game that takes 15 minutes to load from tape, has been converted so that you can now play it 14 minutes earlier than you expected.

* * * * *

MORE COMMODORE ADVENTURES IN THE PIPELINE

Tony Collins says the Commodore version of Corya is nearly ready for release, and he has secured the Commodore rights to Run, Bronwynn, Run; Gruenapped; Starship Quest; Magnetic Moon; Axe of Kolt; Spectre of Castle Coris; Krazy Kartoonist Kaper; Captain Kook; Desmond and Gertrude; Star Flaws; Microfair Madness; The Base; The Test; The Spiro Legacy; The Island; Castle Warlock; and several more. Run, Bronwynn, Run will be converted first, followed by Desmond and Gertrude, Axe of Kolt

* * * * *

THE ADVENTURE WORKSHOP

This new software company, run by Phil Reynolds, will be selling adventures for the Amstrad 8-bit range of computers, and have taken over the publication of those that were in The Guild catalogue. See the advertisement in this issue for full details.

NEW NAME FOR BARE-BONES

I have just received my copy of the latest issue of the bi-monthly 8-bit dedicated magazine, now called GOBLIN GAZETTE - with a name and spelling like that only ONE person would have the cheek to submit such a title. The magazine looks good and Les is very enthusiastic about its future. Only £1.50 per issue from Les Mitchell, 10 Tavistock Street, Newland Avenue, Hull, HU5 2LJ

* * * *

NEW 16-BIT LABEL

Neil Shipman tells me Unnkulian Unventures supremos Dave Leary and Dave Baggett are hard at work on a number of adventures to be marketed under their own new ADVENTIONS label. These include Unnkulian One-Half: The Salesman Triumphant; Unnkulian: The Legend Lives and Unnkulian Zero: The Search for Amanda. They are currently working with the latest version of TADS (v2.0). Work in progress also includes the gothic Horror of Rylvania. ADVENTIONS will be a step up from shareware to a commercial enterprise, but they are aiming to keep costs low.

* * * *

GOOD NEWS FOR SPECTRUM 2A OWNERS

Walter Pooley found an interesting snippet of news in "Micro Mart". It was on the incompatibility of the Spectrum 2A. A Surrey-based firm is doing a kit to bring it to a standard Plus 2. The kit consists of the standard Plus 2 ROM, and a small device which plugs into the expansion port, allowing you to plug in anything which would work with the Plus 2. Fitting is simplicity itself, needing only a screwdriver to do the job. The cost is £18.50 inclusive, and supplied with complete instructions, and available from: BG Services, 64 Roebuck Road, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1JX, Tel: 081-397-0763. Worth a letter or phone call.

IN-TOUCH

FOR SALE - Commodore 64 with Datasette, Joysticks, Manuals and Software. £75. Buyer to arrange collection. Please contact Janice Charnley, 54 Middlehurst Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, WA4 2LG Telephone: 0925 268796

* * * *

FOR SALE - Amstrad adventures including The Pawn, Jinxter, Knight Orc, Scapeghost, Time & Magic, Lurking Horror, all disk £7 each incl. P&P.
Atari adventures Mastertronic versions of Enchanter, Leather Goddesses of Phobos and Deadline £4 each incl. P&P.
Telephone Tom (Leahy) on 061 202 2452 for full details.

* * * *

PERSONAL COLUMN

Simon Avery has send a note to let everyone know that he has moved (again!) from 71 Fore Street to: Whiteway Lodge, Old Exeter Road, Chudleigh, S. Devon, TQ13 0DY

* * * * *

Many congratulations to Hazel and Jim O'Keefe on the birth of their son and daughter - From all your friends in the North.

HELP WANTED

Recently I received a letter from Robert Cleminson to say he had written to numerous sources, including glossy magazines, requesting help, and despite enclosing an SAE he didn't get a single reply. Needless to say, I did, and he has decided to subscribe to Adventure Probe. As he says, and I quote "It would appear if I want consideration and courtesy I must rely on the fair sex". I think he is referring to my gender! If YS was one of the glossies, see the letters column for a possible explanation.....Barbara

Robert, who has an elderly Dragon 32, says he is enjoying playing a couple of Scott Adams adventures. As these were converted for more computers than most of us can name, someone may have the answers to his problems:

In Ghost Town, I have all the treasures except the one from the safe in the telegraph office. I have manufactured the gunpowder and placed it in the keg and placed the keg in the telegraph office. I have also reconnected the wires to the telegraph key. However, I cannot detonate it from the other key in the line shack, WHY?

In SAVAGE ISLAND, Pt.1 I have found the knife and plastic block on the lake bed but when I try to get any of the items, or even go in the lake carrying anything, it immediately becomes so heavy I can no longer hold on to it and swim ashore, again, WHY?

If you know one or more answers, please write to Robert Cleminson, at 6 Whamond Tower, Motherwell, ML1 1UQ

KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CASTLE

Angela Allum, 22 Point Royal, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 7HH has solved the following adventures:-

Mordon's Quest, Avon, Hollywood Hijinx, Scapeghost (950 points), Forest at the World's End, Kobyashu Naru, Auf Wiedersehen Monty, Thing on a Spring and Jack the Nipper.

Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope when requesting help from the Kings and Queens of Adventuring, or anyone else.

GETTING YOU STARTED

TIMEQUEST

by The Grue

Drexlers office: Examine painting - ask drexler about painting - Wait until you are dismissed - west - open drawer - get card - in - insert card in slot.

Timeset Rome 44: Out - up - se - ne - wait - get jar and peg - examine jar - se - put wheel on chariot - put peg in axle - oil wheel - enter chariot - wait until you win the final race - ask caesar for wreath - wait - get sword - kill lion - get focaccia - nw - d - in.

Timeset Cairo 44: Out - n - wait until Cleopatra arrives with invitation - yes - kiss Cleopatra - e - s - in.

Timeset Baghdad 1215: Out - w - n - n - bow - ask merchant about himself - show vial to merchant , who will offer 1 drachma and 1000 yuan - say yes and you will obtain the password for Peking - s - s - e - in.

ELEVEN CRYSTALS 1 by Barbara Gibb played on an Atari

You start on moorland. You have to reach your destination, the nearby village, before nightfall.

N (tall grass leading to quagmire), EXAM GRASS (found something), TAKE ALL (taken: a spade), W (foggy moor) then S (where you see a scroll), W (fog chills you) and N (to soft ground).

DIG HOLE (with spade) and TAKE ALL (taken: a ring) before going W (fog seems to be lifting), S (downward path), S (winding path - can see a notice), W (feel goose-pimply but can see something) so TAKE (blue) CRYSTAL, and return E to path. Go S (orchard valley - you know the village is close), S (on bridle path), S (at the village).

W (to pawn shop where you are asked if you are buying or selling) SELL RING (told it is worthless but given 1CR more than value and told perhaps you can do the village a favour one day), TAKE COIN, E and E (to Smithy), BUY COIF (for your one gold coin), TAKE (chainmail) COIF, W and S (darkness rapidly approaching), E (into the crowded village inn where you notice a man alone in a corner)

EXAM MAN (his name is Eldron and he tells you a tale of tainted ale, food and water, of blind or deformed children. He says the chief of the village will pay whoever is capable of entering Gallows Wood and returning with the head of the foul hobgoblin. You eventually go to bed and sleep 'til morning.

Note - You have only enough moves to get this far before nightfall, hence the use of TAKE ALL, and the absence of EXAM (object) and even LOOK to see what you have found. If you are still out or examining the man in the inn when darkness falls, you will be killed.

HINTS AND TIPS

UNKULIAN by The Grue

Use the lamp (heat source) to destroy the guardian.
Look under the machine in the lighthouse to find a vellum scroll.
Search your dead master three times.
Wear the beasts collar to open the drolls chest.
Move the debris to find another light source.
To enter the monastery, find somewhere hot and cook the egg.
Give egg to monk.
Use the bronze plate inside the monastery if you need to recharge
your rod.
The beaver likes chips ... Wood chips!
Push the boulder off the mountain top?
Look behind the podium or it will never work.
Tickle the feet of the statue.

BAT by THE GRUE

What are the most important character attributes to have?

Reflexes are the most important, make sure they are set to 20.
Energy and Perception, the rest are useless.

Choosing a weapon

You don't actually get the weapons you choose when the game starts. You are only choosing which weapon your local contact gives you. A large weapon is a MDZ or NOVA.

RISE OF THE DRAGON by THE GRUE

What should you do in Blades apartment?

Put on some clothes.
Click magnifying glass on phone and read messages.
Take the picture of Chandra from vidphone.
Take the ammo clip.
Get everything from the bathroom cabinet.
Look under the pillow.
Take the gun and load it.

How do I open the cabinet above the sink?

Have you been to see Karyn at the bureau of records?
Have you begged her for forgiveness?
If that didn't work, look around the alley near city hall.
Did you notice a flower shop?
Why not buy her some flowers?
Give flowers to Karyn and make some excuse about work.
She will give you the keys to unlock your cabinet.

KING'S QUEST 2
by Janice Charnley played on an Amiga

If you cross the rope bridge too many times, it will collapse.
Give the flowers to the mermaid.

Neptune requires the trident in exchange for a key.

Give the nightingale to the woman in the antiques shop and buy the lamp. If you rub the lamp for the third time when the snake blocks your path, you will get a bridle which you can throw at the snake. The snake will change shape and give you something which will help you later on in your quest.

Wear the cloak and ring before your boat ride.

When you have caught your fish, set it free for a safe sea crossing.

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS
by Janice Charnley played on an Amiga

Talk to Grub to obtain the lockpick.

Tell Ratpouch to use the lockpick on the lock at the magician's house.

WISHBRINGER
by Janice Charnley played on an Amiga

There is a bone in the grave, and an umbrella in the graveyard.

Squeeze the can to escape the troll.

Get the branch in order to rescue the Princess from teh pit on the beach.

Take your blanket and move the bunk to go down, then keep the baby grue warm.

Glasses for the film show are under your seat.

THE HOLY GRAIL (Jim MacBrayne)
by Neil Shipman played on an Atari

To raise the drawbridge from inside the castle, you need the gutter, cannonball and sand.

Nothing happens in the magik shoppe? Leave and re-enter. Leave items on the counter until you get something useful.

What's the answer to the statue's riddle? Say Fire.

Lasso the upright to get across the rift.

Lifts don't work with the doors open!

Wear the zuchetto to decipher things.

Extinguish the anti-torch to see in the dark.

You need the horseshoe and philtre to cross the abyss.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 3
by Floyd played on an Atari

After your dis-honourable discharge at the beginning, you might still have a red-letter day if you look in the appropriate place. Mark the piano room well, you'll need something of note in there. Having difficulty with some weeds? Ropy behaviour is required to get to the other side.

To bust the pig, use something close to your heart.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
by Floyd played on an Atari

Freedom? No, that's four mugs (ahem!)
Help out the other inmate for a laugh!

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
by Steve McLaren played on an Amiga

Recipe for pot:- Use 1 cinnamon stick, fine wine, jolly roger,
breath mints, rubber chicken, gunpowder, cereal, ink. Then just
wait and watch

BEYOND ZORK
by Floyd played on an Atari

Tines are also forks - what forks have you seen in the game?
Can't move the onion? Just rock and roll!

BLADE OF BLACKPOOLE
by Dorothy Millard played on a C64

You need the honey to get the bees which should be given to the
carnivorous plant.
Swim in the quicksand.
Pour potion on the boat to shrink it.
Light the lamp from the burning torch.
At the foot of the cliff where the bird is, SING
When confronted by the monster, pour ale into water.
Give the book to the idol and a key appears in your hand.
Hit the boulder with the tuning fork.
Say MAHDEN spell for an arrow then shoot the lizard with the bow
and arrow.
Say MYRAGLYM to be transported back to the forest.
When you are weak from hunger eat the honey.
Return to the tavern to complete the game.

GOLDEN BATON

by Ron Rainbird played on an Atari 800XL
(A real gem for beginners and experienced adventurers alike
and available for most computers)

Wear the cloak and become invisible.
Cut the briars with the sword.
Find the cabin for several useful items.
Kill the wolf, then drop the sword.
Keep your matches dry!
Swim the moat and then throw the rope.
What should you do with the magic ring?
Search the straw in the stable.
To defeat the Gorgon, hold the mirror.
When waving the staff, say "AKYRZ"
Wave the quartz at the lizard man.
Smash the padlock with the hammer.
Still don't know what to do with the ring? - rub it, of course!
Slugs, when salted, are top of the giant crab's menu.
On the lake, blow the horn then throw the knife.
To go sailing, get the raft.

(Dr) JEKYLL AND (Mr) HYDE
by Barbara Gibb played on Spectrum & Atari

Dr.Jekyll always leaves the house via the front door, Mr.Hyde only leaves via the back door.
Put two spoonfuls of tea in the cup, stir and drink the strong brew which keeps you awake long enough for you to read your diary before going to sleep.

Meet Dr.Lanyon in the entrance hall, and ask him for the salt, otherwise he will put it onto his dinner!

Wait until the potion is green before drinking it.

As Dr.Jekyll, use a cab to visit the Estate Agent in Reeve Lane and rent a flat in Stoker Passage.

When you leave via the back door, ensure you lock it to prevent the tramp from entering your laboratory.

At the wall, first note the urchins actions, then return and scare him away before looking for what he has hidden.

(more next issue, if requestedBarbara)

CRICKET CRAZY - PART 1

by Barbara Bassingthwaite played on a Spectrum

When you go into the cockpit and find the unconscious pilot, call someone to fly the plane. (It doesn't seem to matter who!)

Wait around on the dirt track for a peasant to come along with his cart, then hitch a lift.

Toss a coin to start the game of cricket with the native chief.

JESTERS JAUNT

by Dot Vaughan played on a Spectrum

Examine the passage to get key. Examine the vegetable rack more than once.

To get the saddle, you must be carrying and/or wearing 13 items when you first enter the stable. (Sorry - the very important underlined bit fell off the bottom of the "Ask a simple question?" page in the previous issueBarbara)

Drop all, except corn, to cross Water.

Feed and water the elephant.

Don't wear the hat too soon.

END DAY 2240

by Barbara Gibb played on an Atari

Outside Business Cube - EXAMINE the PLATE - should show TRAVIS (your ex-partner) and your own surname, if entered at the beginning of the adventure.

The droid will prevent you from entering, so EXAM DROID, UNSCREW PLATE (need sliver) then PRESS YELLOW AND BLACK BUTTONS (droid is now deactivated). SEARCH DROID and TAKE PIE (a weapon).

Sparse Office Cube - EXAM STATION (see pad and console), EXAM PAD (see faded message), READ MESSAGE (gives details of Travis' flight to Trullion), EXAM CONSOLE (buttons marked AP and F). PRESS AP (for appearance), OPEN DRAWER (of console), SEARCH DRAWER and TAKE SPINY (pin), EXAM PICTURE and SLIDE PICTURE to reveal a cube (safe). EXAM CUBE, EXAM SPINY, and UNLOCK CUBE. SEARCH CUBE to find some ID papers and credit card.

SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

THE PRINCE OF TYNDALL Solution written by Walter Pooley

PART ONE OF FOUR

You, Olgarth, are the ruler of the mountain state of Tyndal. The Rod of Wisdom, handed down through generations of royal princes, and by which all wise decisions are made, has been stolen by Eldin the Sorcerer. The Rod has been taken to Eldin's lair in the Underworld and you must go there, retrieve the Rod, and return to the Castle. You have one friend, Arden the sorcerer's apprentice, who dislikes his master. He will help you when he can. He has given you an old book which he stole from Eldin and which he says will help you. You start outside the closed door of Tyndal Castle, disguised as a peasant. The grounds are surrounded by a high wall and as the guards at the gate will not recognize you, you will not be able to leave that way.

Go south to some trees, east to a clearing and north to a field of ripe corn where you should find a scarecrow; dismantle it and take the pole but leave the rags. Now return south to the Shepherd's cottage in the clearing. When you enter it you see a trapdoor so open it and go down into a gloomy cellar. Take the sheepskin coat and wear it, now take the knife. There is more here, so examine the cellar and get the hook which you can fix to the pole. Now go up and take the lit candle before leaving the cottage. Travel westward until you come to a bell-tower which you have to enter and go up to the belfry. You see a rope which you can't reach until you hook it with the hook and pole device. The knife is too blunt to cut the rope, so burn it with the lit candle. Follow it down, but use the stairs! Drop the candle (or wax if it has gone out) and take the rope before leaving the tower. Continue westward to the castle wall, then follow it northeast to a tree which you should climb until you are at the top. Now jump onto the top of the wall and tie the rope so that you can climb down it to the otherside of the wall. Go southeast to the main entrance where the guards don't recognize you because of your disguise. Now go south to a crossroad and then eastwards until you are standing at the door of a small neat cottage. The door is locked so be polite and knock on it; an unseen hand opens it for you. As soon as you enter the door is locked again; never mind, bound to be another way out!

(to be continued)

Although I said in the previous issue that I do not like full solutions. I will concede that the above storybook-style is an excellent way of printing the details without spoiling it for readers who don't want to see anything they don't choose to read.

If anyone has a request for a specific adventure to be dealt in this way, I (and Jack Lockerby, a master of this style) will do our best to oblige, provided the adventure has been available for more than 12 months.....Barbara

R.P.G. SECTION

BATTLETECH II : The Crescent Hawk's Revenge

Published by Infocom - Price about £20 or less if you shop around

Reviewed by *The Grue*

This is the follow-up to the first RPG/Strategy game that Infocom did albeit a few years late in arriving, but was it worth the wait? The first Battletech game The Crescent Hawk's Inception did not really appeal to me, although I did manage to complete it. So cautiously I installed the game ready for my first encounter Again you take the role of Jason Youngblood, this time there have been rumours that your father might still be alive, captured by the house of Kurita. You are sworn to rescue him, relying on the extensive battle training you've received since the age of nine. It is on the planet Lyons that you begin your quest, for it was on this planet that your father was a member of the Kell Hounds, a famous mercenary mech regiment. As your dropship approaches Lyons, Kurita Aerospace fighters zero in and ambush you and your transport is forced to crash in a lake. It seems you have an uphill struggle if you are ever to see your father again.

The game itself is split into various scenarios or battles and you must win each in order for the story to progress. If you win a scene then the story unwinds a little more and off you go into the next scene. Unlike the first game which was a bit of a mishmash of RPG/strategy and adventure, Battletech II is more akin to a wargame and the use of strategy is of utmost importance.

The graphics are fairly basic, the only exception is between scenes - here the graphics are quite good. The sound effects are not that bad although the speech is not always clear, perhaps this was done intentionally so as to give the effect of the various mech pilots using walkie-talkies. Either way, I quite like the speech, especially when you hear one of the pilots shout "This is Red Bleeder"? Well, that's what it sounded like to me! Each scene takes place on a huge scrolling area, with increasing difficulty of task, such as defending supplies, intercepting a Kurita APC or breaking into an enemy city. Each of the mechs can be instructed to move at various speeds to a number of different locations in one command. You can select to shoot on the defensive or at will and you can isolate a particular target if you so wish. If your mech becomes low on power you can start a forest fire but be careful you don't stay in the fire too long, otherwise you will begin to overheat. You can use this to your advantage with the enemy and trap them in a circle of fire. You can also cool your mech off by placing him in water but this won't always work, depending on the amount of damage your mech has sustained.

The strategies of each scene on a particular world can offer quite a variation, different attack and defense styles, number of mech under your command all make for quite a fun but ultimately tough game. The story is totally linear but this is a plus for it holds the game together nicely.

Once you have reached the year 3025 you will find the game picks up pace somewhat. Now you will have access to a dropship, enabling you to receive intelligence reports, shell attacks etc. etc. you can also call up satellite maps to aid your current battle.

Although having access to all this information is helpful in one way, it also helps to put the player under even more pressure because you must make the pick-up point at a precise time, otherwise the dropship will be forced to leave without you. Which basically means even if you can complete the scene and win the battle, if you do not make the pick-up, you lose.

As you complete scenes your experience goes up and your mech pilots will react better and faster to most situations and to top it all can shoot the enemy more accurately. If you reach a particular scene in the game that you can't seem to complete it can be a bit difficult to decide whether your tactics are wrong, or it was something you did in an earlier scene. Well let me say that near the beginning of the game, perhaps the first six scenes, it is probably your tactics. If however like me you rescued everyone from the prison and only have to return to the dropship to find out if your father was one of the prisoners but can't because Jason, the main character, has sustained so much damage it's impossible for him to make it back, then it is more likely that your strategy has been just about good enough to complete the earlier scenes but in doing so you have gradually reduced your chance of winning the game overall. The moral to learn from all this is that you can win battles and progress but you must win well to succeed with the overall mission of the game.

The storyline is very fair and it all makes sense, the way a large game has been broken down into smaller missions is well implemented. The graphics in general are a bit of a disappointment and have not really been enhanced from the first game. For all its pluses and minuses I found it a very addictive game, seasoned strategy players would probably find it a bit of a let down but for someone who doesn't play a lot of this type of game I really enjoyed it. The system is nice and simple without bogging the player down with hoards of options to choose from, which can over-complicate and frustrate some less experienced players.

Would I recommend Battletech II to someone? Well, not at the RRP of about 36 quid, but I've seen it in shops for as little as £18 and at that sort of price it's definitely worth a look. Anyway, it made a nice change from playing PGA Tour Golf!

SHADOWLANDS

Published by Domark

Reviewed by Ted Bugler on PC

(also available for Amiga and Atari ST)

This new release is described on the box as a "completely new role playing experience", and as such it is hopefully one that will not be repeated! It is, so far as I have been able to establish, utterly useless. Even my local software retailer - while refusing to exchange it for something merchandisable, thereby proving that even in the middle of a recession the customer is no longer always right - admitted that whilst the game is also described as a step forward in role playing there is no guarantee that it is a step forward in the right direction! My real problem in composing the usual in-depth review based on a balanced view of the completed game is that in this case I haven't managed to see more than a tiny fraction of it, because the interface really has defeated me.

I won't go into the storyline because it's the standard "defeat the dark lord" scenario, but the game is set in some Super VGA largely monochrome dungeons displayed in isometric fashion. Your party consists of four characters, a magic-user (with no magic to start with), a warrior, an orc, and a priest (you guessed it - he doesn't have any magic to start with either!), who move around the screen either as a group or individually according to whether you click on the characters' left leg or right leg.

All commands are based on clicking on a part of the character's anatomy (I was relieved to find that some functions are not catered for) and if you, for example, look at a plaque (by clicking on the head) then you can't move again without clicking on a leg first.

You may have already got the teeniest impression that I'm not altogether impressed with the interface, but believe me, until you've tried it in the dark you haven't seen anything, as it were! Darkness, or the revolutionary new Photoscape lighting system as Domark prefer to call it, is in fact the central feature of the game. The whole dungeon is pitch black unless you are carrying a torch or are within a short distance of one hanging on a wall. This creates two problems.

First, whilst a torch is hanging on the wall stays illuminated for ever, once you get hold of it it goes out before you can say "the friendly and intuitive mouse-driven control system" (yet another quote from the box), and although Domark have apparently reassured my retailer (who was relaying my grounds for obtaining an exchange of software) that a torch can be recharged using "magik force" the manual makes it clear that "energy can only be absorbed from objects - not charged into them"). Funnily enough Domark even suggested my problems stemmed from not reading the manual properly!

The second problem with the torches is that if the character carrying the illuminated torch moves away from the rest of the party you can't see them! In my case, after several real attempts to master the "advanced interface design", to quote the manual this time, I managed to get the character with the torch to stand in front of a coin slot whilst the character who had the coin was standing a few inches away in Photoscopic darkness. As a result I was well and truly up the creek because before I could move the illuminated character back into the main party his torch went out and I didn't have any unspent ones on me and couldn't find my way in the dark to any wall-hanging ones.

I suppose that this is a genuine attempt to break new ground but I do wish they hadn't bothered. When you compare both the graphics and interface with Legend then it really does dawn on you how appalling this game is, even if Domark's playtester - who says he usually only plays arcade games - does think it is wonderful and worth playing through the tutorial levels in order to get to the more challenging part of the dungeon. I found Level One quite challenging enough, thank you very much!

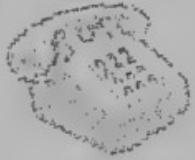
By way of conclusion, in case I haven't expressed myself clearly enough, do yourself a favour if you see this game on a shop shelf, leave it there - I certainly wish I had! Mind you, it was given a benchmark rating by Ace - but then we all know what happened to that particular magazine, don't we?

CONQUESTS OF CAMELOT - PART FOUR
A guide by Ron Rainbird played on an Amiga 500

You will now be arriving by sea at Gaza. Ignore anyone except Hazin at the Fort. Go with him to the Scholar and ask about Galahad, the Goddesses and the Guardians. Take careful note of the symbols he draws in the sand. You may eat and drink with him in complete safety. Leave the garden and go to the hill above Gaza. Again, ignore anyone you may meet there. Go down to the box canyon and then, using your Lodestone, go East to enter the desert. Go South once and then East to a small pool. Take no notice of the man there and do not drink from the pool - it is poisoned! To frighten Jabir away, draw your sword - he will, however, be waiting to ambush you later. Head East around a Wadi, then North to some stone stairs and South to the Pool of Siloam where you may drink. Go back to the Stairs and carry on in the same direction. Watch out for Jahir if he hasn't already tried to ambush you. Go to the Walls of Jerusalem but be sure that you have sheathed your sword. Do not get into a fight with the Arabs at the Zion Gate - instead you must bribe them, then follow the Walls until you come to the Jaffa Gate. On entering the Bazaar, a thief will take your purse. Do not try to pursue him - it is hopeless! Find Mohammed and sell him your mule - he will give you a fair price for it. The next steps could be complicated and there are several ways of completing them (I think) but I found the following was the best sequence. First, travel all around the Bazaar and get to know the names and types of shops and talk to all the shopkeepers. Once you know where everyone is, buy an Apple from the Seeress for a Gold Coin. Buy a Felatet from Sarak and give it to the beggar boy. Buy a Mirror from the Pottery Seller and go to Mohammed's Shop. Shout for Mari and throw her the Mirror. She will throw you a Veil in return. Give the Veil to Ibrahim. Go to Tariq and buy Herbs which you must take to Hayyam the Fishmonger. Go to Fawrez and buy some Lamb. Go down the street to Sarak and give the Lamb to her. Visit Ismail, the Relic Merchant, and buy a Relic which must be taken to Tariq. He will let you take his Broom. Now go to the Inn, knock and give the Broom to Achmed. Go East to the beggar and tell to him. The beggar is a Leper. Go back to Tariq, buy some charcoal and give it to the Leprous Beggar. Back to Mohammed and talk to a crying girl, then go to Ali and buy some grain. Return to the crying girl and throw grain near to the cage. Go to the Seeress from whom you can now get an Apple of Strength - do not eat it yet! If you have previously spoken to all the Shopkeepers you will understand the reasons for the foregoing apparently unrelated acts. Now go to the door with a Star and Crescent upon it, knock and enter. This is the home of the seductive Fatima so be prepared to maintain your virtuous attitude. (to be continued)

HEIMDALL
Some general advice from Ron Rainbird

Arm your party with Silver Daggers as soon as possible. These are the most efficient and deadly weapons because you can get several thrusts in to your opponent's one. Keep well stocked up with food otherwise you will not be able to travel freely between islands. My successful party consisted of Heimdall, a Wizard, a Blacksmith, a Navigator and two fighters. Once they are armed with Silver Daggers, they are virtually unbeatable.



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